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That this is the conclusion of the poem is certain, because it is followed by the sign of the end of the Megilla. Namely, the words **תמה ושלום**, which appear in the MSS., must be retained; they mean only that the Megilla is here at an end. **שלום** is the well-known formula of greeting, the Megilla being considered a letter. The following **לבעצרה** means here, as usually in Arabic collections of poems, that the following verse belongs to another poet; in this case to Samuel Hanagid. The date on the MS. indicates therefore only the time when this copy was written, but in no way refers to the time in which the events, described in the Megilla, took place.

Samuel Hanagid's verse was not, it seems, placed by chance at the end of the Megilla. Rather is it evident, that the writer mistook the verse for one of the Egyptian Nagid Samuel b. Chananya, who was frequently confounded in Egypt with the Spanish Nagid Samuel. Such confusion of these two persons explains also Joseph Sambari's assumptions, that Samuel Hanagid's introduction, quoted already by Abraham ibn Da'ud, was the work of the Egyptian, and that Samuel b. Chananya had come to Egypt from Spain¹.

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THE EGYPTIAN SUTTA-MEGILLA.

IN order to understand the historical contents of the Egyptian Megilla, brought to light by Mr. Wertheimer and Dr. Neubauer, we are compelled to assume that a number of leaves are missing, which bore upon several passages in the text where the want of continuity was not observed by the editors. Thus, the very beginning of the narrative proper, in which Samuel Hanagid's princely liberality seems to have been mentioned, is missing. For it is impossible that Samuel should have suddenly made his appearance, like a *deus ex machina*, as we see him do in our text, p. 545, last line but one; some mention of, and narrative about him must have preceded. But in that way, Mardochai, who was assumed by Dr. Neubauer to have been Samuel's predecessor and Nagid of Egypt (p. 553), disappears altogether from the scene. Mardochai is Samuel Hanagid himself, of

¹ Comp. Kaufmann, *Monatsschrift*, 40, 417.

whom (p. 545, l. 16) it is said, that he was מרדכי הזמן, the Mardochai of his time, who saved the Jews of Egypt from the hands of the Haman of his time. That the firebrand and disturber of the Jews in Egypt was called Haman is as impossible to assume as that the bearer of the honourable title of "the Mardochai of his time" should have been called Mardochai.

But there is also an important break only a few lines after the commencement of our text. On p. 545, l. 15, before the word פנה—where, by the way, read פנה הורה פנה זיוה = פנה ההרר instead of פנה ההרר—the loss of a more or less large piece must be assumed, in which Samuel's forcible supersession by Sutta must have been narrated.

But the mourning at the triumph of the oppressor lasted only for sixty-six days, after which Samuel was reinstated in his dignity as Nagid (השיר, p. 545, l. 2 from the bottom). It was then that the author of our Megilla composed the ingenious four-lined epigram, which should read as follows (p. 546, l. 2):—

בתי כנסיות לבדר ישבו • בן כל ימי פנעם אשר נגורו
דמו לזולת בשבתה עד מלאת • ששה וששים יום וטהרו (?)

Sutta, so quickly deprived of his honours, secretly watched for an opportunity to raise his head again, and to recover his lost influence. He hoarded up a colossal fortune, which he thought would place the power in his hands again, as soon as the Egyptian finances had reached low tide.

Samuel Hanagid died before 1169, before the new Sultan Saladin had come to the throne. No sooner was he dead than Sutta made a denunciation about the treasures which the Nagid of the Egyptian Jews was alleged to have acquired. The sums were sought for, but were not found, the slander was proved to be baseless, and the informer remained in the disgrace into which he had fallen years before.

But Saladin wanted money; Sutta offered him large sums, and induced him to sell him the dignity of Nagid, and thus to play the game of the ambitious schemer, who even took the Messianic appellation of Sar Shalom.—P. 546, l. 10, read וישיג האותו שר השרים.—שר השרים was the title of the Nagid, שררה designates the dignity of Nagid, with which the collection of the taxes, which the Jews were liable to pay, was connected. The payment was being enforced with inexorable severity, such as was only to be expected of such a man. He stretched forth his hand, says our text, p. 546, l. 19 (read וישט שעל), and took off the shoe from the barefooted.

The oppression continued for four years, after which a change was brought about by the man who is revered in Jewish literature as the eagle of the Synagogue. We learn from our Megilla, that Moses Maimonides was a person of historical significance, who had a great and salutary influence upon the affairs of his co-religionists in Egypt. Was it his position as Saladin's physician which enabled him to gain the ear of that ruler in favour of his brethren? In every way, it must be attributed to his interference that Sar Shalom was driven from his position, and that the oppression, which weighed down the Egyptian Jews, was relieved.

But unfortunately, another piece is missing in an important passage of our text. It is clear that the continuity of the narrative is interrupted on p. 547, l. 2, where the circumstances connected with the change in the conditions of the Egyptian Jews, brought about by Maimonides, were narrated. It may have been at that time that Maimonides was offered the dignity of Nagid, which he refused to accept.

Instead of the important piece, which is lost, we get, from p. 547, l. 16 to p. 548¹, l. 2 from the bottom, a leaf from a *Makame*, which has simply blundered into that place. Neubauer's proofs of Sutta's Rabbinical learning (p. 543) are, therefore, only a *quid pro quo*.

Sar Shalom Halevi, as Sutta was probably called when a Nagid (p. 555, App. II), soon enjoyed the assistance of a son, who became his master in all the arts of tyranny, and the practices of a pasha. Denunciations, the like of which were never before heard of, were of everyday occurrence; men of spotless reputation denounced as spies and enemies of the Sultan, and put to death. Egypt must at that time have presented a shocking picture of Jewish communal life. The communities, in their despair, had recourse to excommunication. The Nagid and his son, whose duty it was to manage Jewish affairs and to protect their brethren, were proscribed as informers. But mere excommunication was not enough to arrest the evil; till at last R. Isaac took matters into his hands, and led a deputation from the Jewish communities before the Sultan Saladin, to whom they described their unendurable position, and thus brought about the downfall of Sar Shalom and his son. Further information about this R. Isaac can only be expected when further documents on the subject have been discovered.

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¹ P. 548, l. 6, I read והגדור : 1. 9 גמרתה וידעתה ; 1. 24 והוא.